

# Teach Me to Love

Louise Wheatley Cook [Hoxnanian](#)

There was a time when in my daily prayer  
I asked for all the things I deemed most fair,  
And necessary to my life,—success,  
Riches, of course, and ease, and happiness;  
A host of friends, a home without alloy;  
A primrose path of luxury and joy,  
Social distinction, and enough of fame  
To leave behind a well-remembered name.

Ambition ruled my life. I longed to do  
Great things, that all my little world might view  
And whisper, “Wonderful!”

How blind we are, until Thy shepherd’s rod  
Of tender chastening gently leads us on  
To better things! Today I have but one  
Petition, Lord—Teach me to love. Indeed,  
It is my greatest and my only need—  
Teach me to love, not those who first love me,  
But all the world, with that rare purity  
Of broad, outreaching thought which bears no trace  
Of earthly taint, but holds in its embrace  
Humanity, and only seems to see  
The good in all, reflected, Lord, from Thee.

And teach me, Father, how to love the most  
Those who most stand in need of love—That host  
Of people who are sick and poor and bad,  
Whose tired faces show their lives are sad,

Who toil along the road with footsteps slow,  
And hearts more heavy than the world can know—  
People whom others pass discreetly by,  
Or fail to hear the pleading of that cry  
For help, amid the tumult of the crowd;  
Whose very anguish makes them cold and proud,  
Resentful, stubborn, bitter in their grief—  
I want to bring them comfort and relief.  
To put my hand in theirs, and at their side  
Walk softly on, a faithful, fearless guide.

O Saviour, thou the Christ, Truth, ever near,  
Help me to feel these sad ones doubly dear  
Because they need so much! Help me to seek  
And find that which they thought was lost; to speak  
Such words of cheer that as we pass along  
The wilderness shall blossom into song.  
Ah, Love divine, how empty was that prayer  
Of other days! That which was once so fair,—  
Those flimsy baubles which the world calls joys  
Are nothing to me now but broken toys,  
Outlived, outgrown. I thank thee that I know  
Those much-desired dreams of long ago,  
Like butterflies, have had their summer’s day  
Of brief enchantment, and have gone. I pray  
For better things.

Thou [knowest](#), God above,  
My one desire now—Teach me to love.